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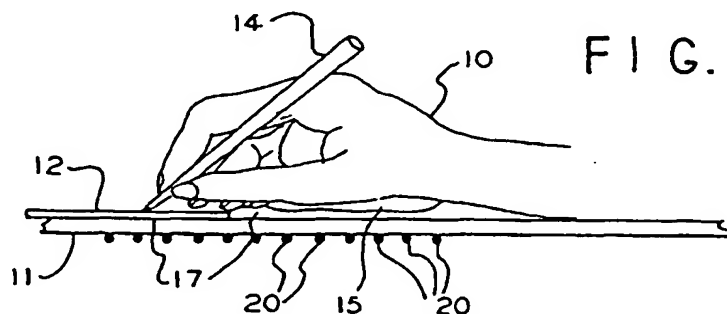
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(54) **A system and method for verifying the identity of a person**

(57) A system and method for verifying the identity of a person while the person is performing a seemingly unrelated act. The position of a person's hand (10) in contact with a sensing surface (11), while holding an object and/or performing a task, such as using a writing instrument (14) to write one's signature or a computer mouse (42) in association with a computer, for example, is distinctive and consistent and will serve to verify the

identity of a person, when data defining such contact is compared with a standard defined by previously determined data from the same person. Sensing devices (20), such as pressure or electrical transducers or other sensors can be located in or on a sensing surface (11) to determine the parameters of contact between the person's hand (10) and the sensing surface (11).



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Description

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention:

[0001] The present invention relates to methods and apparatus for verifying the identity of a person, without informing the person that verification of the person's identity is being performed.

Prior Art:

[0002] There are well known methods and techniques used to verify the identity of a person. A popular method is the comparison of the face of a person with a reliable photograph, for example, a photograph on one's driver's license. One problem with this form of verification is that driver's licenses, complete with photograph, can be falsified. This is also true with passports and passport photographs.

[0003] Another method and apparatus for identification verification include the taking and comparing of finger prints, while more sophisticated methods and apparatus verify persons by voice patterns and also by distinctive patterns in the retina of the eye. The former verification method is widely used by law enforcement organizations. It provides strong verification but it is dirty, requiring the use of finger print ink, and an experienced finger print taking person for making an acceptable finger print on a form. The latter two methods require very sophisticated and expensive apparatus and, in all of the above methods, the person whose identity is being verified or challenged, is aware that his or her identification is being challenged.

[0004] It has been found that the hands of individuals are distinctive. Some US patents that teach scanning the physical dimensions of the human hand for identification verification include the patents:

35 76 537	to Ernst	1971
36 48 240	to Jacoby et al	1972
46 69 487	to Frieling	1987
47 20 869	to Wadia	1988
47 36 203	to Sidlauskas	1988

[0005] Generally, the teachings of the Ernst patent, the Jacoby et al patent and the Wadia patent relate to two dimensional scanings of the hand where the hand is placed on a scanning plate which performs the scanning. The teaching in the Sidlauskas patent covers three dimensional scanings while the patent to Frieling teaches apparatus for sensing the thickness and longitudinal distance between adjacent knuckles of the finger of the hand. In each of these teachings it is inherent that the person whose identification is being verified, is acutely aware that his identity is being challenged.

5 [0006] The US patents:

47 32 965	to Dunkley et al	1988
48 56 077	to Rothfjell	1989
51 50 420	to Haraguchi	1992
53 47 589	to Meeks et al	1994

10 relate to verifying a person's identification though a handwritten signature or hand writing comparison.

[0007] US Patent No. 44 95 644 to Parks et al, in 1985 teaches using other characteristics relating to one's handwriting, rather than handwriting itself, for a personal verification. Gladstone, in his US Patent No. 50 18 208, issued in 1991 teaches the use of a pressure detection device incorporated into a writing instrument, which relates to the pressure applied by the writer, through the writing device, when writing with the writing device.

[0008] Basically, all the above cited prior art require some degree of conscious cooperation on the part of the person whose identification is being challenged. It is often undesirable and sometimes embarrassing to ask a person to engage in an act that has an objective of challenging a person's identification. The present invention overcomes the undesirable aspect of challenging one's identity by accomplishing the challenging act surreptitiously, while the person is performing a normally required act.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

40 [0009] It has been determined that each person grasps a writing instrument in a distinctive manner. This is apparent when the Gladstone (US 50 18 208) teaching is considered. However, we have also determined that each person, when writing with a writing instrument, rests the hand holding a writing instrument, on a surface in a distinctive manner. For example, when writing a signature using a writing instrument, the side of the hand used to write the signature, including the heel of the hand and the side of the hand extending to the base of the small finger (the pinky), plus the small finger itself, form a distinctive pattern against the surface on which the hand rests. This pattern, with relation to the impression point of the writing instrument used, is so individual and consistent that a person's identity may be verified by comparing a previously taken pattern of such person, with a second or current pattern, taken from the same person.

55 [0010] The advantages of using the novel methods of

the present invention to verify the identity of a person become apparent when one considers how the pattern used for comparison is obtained. The person, whose identity is to be verified, is requested to perform a normal act, that is, to sign a receipt. The sheet on which the receipt is printed is positioned on a plate through which the desired pattern is detected. The signing of a receipt is a normal, and often necessary act and the detection of the pattern of the person's hand as the hand contacts the support plate, during writing a signature on the receipt is accomplished virtually without the knowledge of the person signing the name.

[0011] Likewise, we have also determined that a distinctive and consistent pattern of hand contact is obtained, when a person grasps and operates a computer mouse, the hand contact being made between the hand and the computer mouse and the hand and the surface over which the computer mouse is moved. The pattern is made by the hand holding and operating the computer mouse, as parts of the hand grip the computer mouse and, at the same time, make contact with the surface over which the mouse is moved. Because of the wide use and familiarity of computers, it would not be unreasonable or unusual to have a person operate a computer mouse during a business procedure. While a person is operating a computer mouse, the plate over which the computer mouse is moved may cover a pattern detection means and the pattern formed by the hand parts and fingers of the person holding and operating the mouse over the plate, may be detected, virtually without the knowledge of the person using and/or moving the computer mouse.

[0012] If a person is not told that the pattern looked for is being monitored and/or detected, there is no reason to affect an otherwise normal or natural stance when signing one's name or using and/or moving a computer mouse over a surface.

[0013] The novel patterns discussed above can be obtained using any of several techniques; optically, by use of a sensitive film and camera positioned under the contact surface; photo-electrically, using light emitting elements and photo detectors in or under the contact surface and detecting reflected light; electrically, by using an array or matrix of switches mounted in or on the undersurface of the contact plate or surface; or, by use of pressure sensitive elements, such as resistive transducers, mounted in or on the underside of the contact surface.

[0014] Patterns obtained for identification verification can be compared with previously taken patterns of the principal person. Comparison may be made using pattern recognition systems or techniques or a mathematical algorithm in which alpha-numeric data defining angles and/or other parameterized values defining angle by length are compared. The alpha-numeric data identifying the person may be stored on the magnetic strip of the credit card provided to a person. Identification patterns may be obtained while the person using

the card is signing a receipt and comparison of the newly acquired alpha-numeric data may be made with the data stored on the magnetic strip thus verifying the identity of the person using the credit card.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0015]

- 10 Fig. 1 is a representation, in side elevation view, of a hand of a person writing with a writing instrument with part of the hand in contact with a surface;
- Fig. 1a is a representation, in side elevation view, of an alternate sensitive pad or sheet;
- 15 Fig. 2 is a representation of the hand shown in Fig. 1 as viewed from below the surface of contact;
- Fig. 3 is a representation of the hand of Fig. 1 shown in Fig. 2 with intersecting lines forming angles of the components indicated;
- Fig. 4 is a representation, in side elevation view, of a hand holding a computer mouse, showing the area of contact against a surface;
- 25 Fig. 5 is a representation of the hand shown in Fig. 4, viewed from below the surface,
- Fig. 6 is a block diagram of one embodiment of the invention, and
- Fig. 7 is a block diagram of another embodiment of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0016] The invention, from its broadest aspect, provides a method and apparatus for confirming the identity of a person from a personal pattern, derived from the person performing a seemingly unrelated act and virtually without the knowledge of such person. The seemingly unrelated act is the signing of a receipt, which is a normal business practice. The act of signing one's name is performed on a support surface or desk surface or writing surface under which or which is part of a pattern detection means and functions to detect certain personal patterns, detectable while the person is performing the act and unique to the person performing the act, detection being made without the knowledge of the person performing the act. Firstly, the hand which the person uses, when signing his or her name, is quickly detected and determined. Secondly, when holding a writing instrument and writing something on a sheet of paper, for example, such as a signature, for example, part of the hand holding the writing instrument will make contact with the surface used to support the substrate or paper when the signing takes place. This contact with the surface will form a detectable and distinctive pattern which can be compared with a previously obtained pattern detected during a similar activity or act done by the principal or standard person. Com-

paring two patterns, obtained from first and second acts, will confirm that the person performing the second act, is or is not the same person who performed the first act.

[0017] It has been found that when a person signs their name on a paper, for example, and the paper is supported on a flat surface, the heel of the hand holding the writing instrument (the fleshy part of the hand adjacent the metacarpal bone and the ulna) and the outside length of the small finger (the pinky) including the first, second and third lateral aspects of the small finger, and portions of the ring and middle fingers contact the flat surface in a manner that is distinctive to each person. Contact by various parts of the hand with the flat surface forms a distinctive pattern. This distinctive pattern and the distinctive manner in which such person holds a writing instrument define characteristics, which are individual and distinctive to such person. The differences in these characteristics are so distinctive that persons with virtually the same size and shape hand are distinguishable, one from the other because of differences in holding a writing instrument or other object, such as a computer mouse, for example, and thereby project a different impression or pattern of such characteristics sensed through a support surface.

[0018] These characteristics can be detected and/or measured in numerous ways: Firstly, the hand, whether the right hand or the left hand, used may be detected; secondly by 1) sensing and measuring the area of contact; 2) the pressure applied to the support surface by the writing instrument and the hand surface; 3) the individual angles of the elements of the hand, that is, the bend of the small finger (pinky) with respect to the bone along the heel of the hand and angle at which the ring and middle finger make contact with the support surface and the angle of the writing instrument relative to the support surface. These characteristics may, when considered cumulatively, be used to confirm the identity of a person, whose characteristics are already known.

[0019] When practicing the present invention the identity of a person, whose hand position, while writing characteristics have already been established in a memory device, can be confirmed, without the person's knowledge, since such person will be providing a signature, in a normal manner without realizing the characteristics associated with the position of the hand are being monitored and detected so that a comparison of such characteristics may be made against known characteristics.

[0020] A sensitive surface or plate is provided on which a paper or other document is positioned to receive the signature of a person, whose identity is to be confirmed. The sensitive surface or plate may be built into a glass or plastic sheet normally used as a support surface for supporting documents. The sensitive surface may be in the form of an overlay positioned on a support plate or pad positioned on a support plate. The sensitive surface is defined by a plurality of spaced sensors positioned to establish a grid formation. When the

hand grips the writing instrument and is positioned on the sensitive surface, in order to sign the document positioned on the sensitive surface, contact by the hand and writing instrument are sensed and interrogated, relative to the sensor grid. A determination of right hand or left hand is made; a pattern of contact between parts of the hand and the support surface is sensed, along with the pressure of the hand parts on the sensitive surface and the position and pressure of the point of the writing instrument on the surface. This data is converted to a common denominator and is compared with similar data, previously obtained, from an individual, the identity of whom is positively known.

[0021] The comparison may be done using well known computer techniques and is simplified because the data defining the characteristics are known so that the newly obtained data is compared with already obtained and known data and by comparison, a determination of yes or no can quickly be made.

[0022] As shown in Fig. 1, a sensitive surface 11 is provided on which a sheet or document 12, such as a receipt, for example, is placed on which a signature is required. The person whose identity is to be confirmed is requested to sign the document 12. The hand 10 represents the hand of the person signing the document using a writing instrument 14, which may be a normal ball-point pen, for example. The sensitive surface 11 may take one of several forms. One embodiment of the invention provides a sensitive surface or plate in the form of a glass or plastic plate or sheet integrated into the surface of a desk or other writing surface. The glass or plastic plate may be translucent or opaque to visible light but transparent to infrared, ultra-violet and/or other microwave energy, and/or may be pressure sensitive. Sensors may be located in the plate or on the under surface of the plate. Sensors may be located, relative to each other so as to form a grid with centers of 1/16" or less.

[0023] Alternatively, the sensitive surface or plate may be in the form of an overlay plate or sheet or a portable document support that may be positioned at any convenient location on a desk, table or support surface. The overlay may be a plastic or rubber sheet with sensors integrated into the sheet and over which a document is positioned so the act of writing on the document is sensed or detected by the sensors integrated into the overlay. The overlay sheet may be flexible or rigid.

[0024] The portable document support may be constructed like a receipt/order container-dispenser used in many stores.

[0025] As represented in Fig. 1, a plurality of sensors 20 are located on the under surface of the plate 11. The sensors are positioned, relative to each other, so as to define a grid, represented by the lines 22/21, in Figs. 2 and 3. The accuracy of the invention is defined by the spacing between the centers of the sensors, since the pattern obtained by the sensors is on a sensor-to-sensor basis rather than on a position-on-the-sensitive-sur-

face basis.

[0026] Fig. 1a shows sensors 17a embedded in the lay over sheet or pad 11a with a document substrate 12a on the layover sheet or pad.

[0027] When practicing the invention any sensor transducers that sense contact or are actuated by proximity of matter or are actuated by reflection, such as pressure sensitive transducers or optical transducers, such as infrared, ultra-violet or light emitting diodes, with corresponding photo detectors may be used for detecting contact and proximity of a person's hand to the contact surface, without limitation thereto. Pressure sensitive transducers may be used for detecting contact with the surface. With optical transducers, a central light emitting element and a plurality of spaced photo diodes may be used.

[0028] Sensors can detect and measure contact and/or pressure and a pattern defining such contact and/or pressure from activated sensors is obtained by a multiplexed system with analog to digital conversion, using well known techniques. The pattern obtained is preferably a three dimensional pattern of the hand although a two dimensional pattern may be used, if desired. The pattern, in digital form, is stored in a computer memory. Subsequent mathematical manipulation of the digital data may be applied to smooth or average the parameters. The data and the averaged data is applied to computer software to compare such pattern with previous pattern or patterns of the original, positively identified person, with whom confirmation is the objective.

[0029] Fig. 2 shows, from beneath the sensing or sensitive plate 11, the hand 10 holding a writing instrument 14 with part of the hand (in shaded area) in contact with the upper surface of the sensing or sensitive plate 11. The sensors 20 (not all of which are represented) define a grid-like formation. The sensing devices may be located on the under surface of the sensing plate or may be integrated into the sensing plate in a matrix. Fig. 3 shows the same sensing or sensitive plate 11 in a view corresponding to the view shown in Fig. 2, however, the hand 10 is shown in broken line form and the lines 30 - 34 represent the position of elements of the hand, and angles formed by these elements, which angles are distinctive and consistent to the same person.

[0030] It has been found that one characteristic is particularly distinctive. This distinctive characteristic is the position and angle formed by lines defining the linear portion of the end bone of the little finger and the length of the heel of the hand, such as formed by the lines 31 and 33 at 35.

[0031] Another distinctive, individual characteristic is defined by angles formed by the second and third lateral aspects of the pinky.

[0032] Computer techniques are used to store the original data defining the distinctive characteristics of a person, whose identity is known. This original data is used as a standard for use in confirming the identity of

that particular person. Subsequent data, defining essentially the same group of characteristics is obtained from a person whose identity is to be confirmed.

[0033] The standard data for a person may be stored in a computer, in any type of memory. The standard for a person may also be stored on a credit card and the standard may be read by a reading device associated with the credit card number reader and identity confirmation can be made by a pattern of characteristics sensing and distinguishing system associated with the credit card receipt carrier, on which a person signs the credit card receipt.

[0034] The standard data consistent with a person's identity is stored in a computer memory. Subsequent data of the same group of characteristics may be obtained from a second person and compared with the standard data, with the objective of confirming the identity of the second person, relative to the person identified by the standard data.

[0035] If a predetermined number of points match when comparison is attempted, such as 90%, or there is 90% agreement in comparing the parameters, confirmation that the two persons are the same person is established. If a predetermined number of points do not match, the second person may be asked to perform the signing or identifying act a second time and a second comparison with the standard may be made. If the predetermined comparison standard is not met, confirmation of identity is not established.

[0036] Techniques for reading the pattern of characteristics may be done in several ways. Reading the pattern of characteristics may be started by the writing instrument making contact with the sensitive plate or sheet. One reading could be taken or several timed readings could be taken, or a constant reading may be taken during the time the signature is being made. Preferably, reading the pattern of contact characteristics is started and made when the person signing the paper or receipt, for example, makes contact by the writing instrument with the sensing or sensitive plate or sheet.

[0037] The pattern of contact characteristics may be slightly different when a person providing a signature is standing as opposed to sitting. Thus, different standards may be taken and used for the same person.

[0038] An original standard for a person may be obtained, with or without the person's knowledge. There is no need for a special procedure although an institution, such as a bank, for example, may want customers to be aware that the security used by the bank includes involuntary security checks, such as the present invention. An original standard may be obtained, without a special procedure, when a person first uses a particular credit card, signing his name on a credit card receipt. In the latter instance, there will not be a standard with which the pattern may be compared. However, non-procedural security checks can be carried out subsequently, using the standard obtained from the first use signature for that particular credit card.

[0039] Although preferably the practice of the invention is accomplished during the act of writing a signature, for example, Fig. 4 represents another embodiment of the invention. A hand 40 of a person is represented holding and/or operating a computer mouse 42 on a surface 44. A plurality of spaced sensors 45 are positioned, in a grid or other geometric pattern on the underside of the plate 44. Although a 90 degree grid pattern for the sensing elements is represented and preferred, a circular pattern of sensors may be used, with a centrally located sensor and additional sensors spaced radially from the centrally located sensor and arcuately from each other.

[0040] Fig. 5 represents a view of the hand 40 and mouse 42 of Fig. 4, from the underside of the plate 44, looking up. The grid lines represent that sensor devices are positioned at intersections of the lines, with spacing of 1/16" between lines. As seen from below, the thumb 48 and heel 49 of the hand 40 form a distinctive spacing pattern, along with the spacing of the finger tips 50 - 53.

[0041] Fig. 6 is a block diagram of a system or apparatus that may be used in practicing the invention. A sensor pad or sheet or a sensitive plate 60 provides detection signals from which a pattern of characteristics of contact is generated. The sensor or detection signals are input into a computer 62 which converts the signals into digital data. The data is stored in a memory 64. If there is already a standard for a person, and the current reading is a second or more reading, the second or more reading may be compared with the standard in the comparison circuitry 66 and the results of such comparison may be displayed on the display or monitor 68.

[0042] Alternatively, the data can be stored directly on the card magnetically or otherwise such as in "smart" cards by well known techniques.

[0043] Thus, there has been shown and described a preferred embodiment of a system and apparatus for verifying the identity of a person when a person performs an act, such as writing with a writing instrument on a sensitive surface, pad or sheet. In addition, the invention has also been described in an alternate arrangement where the identity of a person is confirmed when the person performs an alternate act, such as, using a computer mouse. In each case a pattern of contact between the hand and a surface, which is distinctive and consistent, is obtained and the pattern may be compared with a previously obtained standard to verify the identity of the person performing the second, like act. Other alternate apparatus has been suggested, along with some modifications.

[0044] Other changes and/or modifications may be made by those skilled in the art without departing from the invention.

Claims

1. A system for verifying the identity of a person based on a relationship between anatomic structures of a

hand of said person when said person is performing an act with said hand and said hand is in contact with a support surface which is related to said act, said system comprising:

a) a sensor means defined by a plurality of sensor elements supported by said support surface, said plurality of sensor elements positioned for determining a positional relationship between anatomic structures of said hand, when performing said act and said hand is in contact with said upper surface of said support surface and said person is performing a first act with said hand, and

b) a comparator means for comparing said positional relationship between said anatomic structures of said hand with a previously established standard for said positional relationship between said anatomic structures of said hand of said person while performing a second act, corresponding to said first act, for verifying an identity of said person.

2. A system as in claim 1, wherein said sensor means is a plate and said plate supports an instrument means with which said first act is performed and said plurality of spaced sensor elements are coupled to said plate.

3. A system as in claim 1, wherein said sensor means is a sheet for supporting a substrate and said first act is writing on said substrate and said plurality of spaced sensor elements are coupled to said sheet.

4. A system as in claim 1, wherein said sensor means is a pad for supporting a substrate and said first act is writing on said substrate and said plurality of spaced sensor elements are coupled to said pad.

5. A system as in claim 1, wherein said sensor means includes a substrate with an upper surface and a lower surface, said substrate for supporting, on said upper surface, a second substrate, on which said person performs said first act with a writing instrument, and a plurality of sensor transducers, mounted below said upper surface for detecting contact by said hand with said upper surface during performance of said first act.

6. A system as in claim 5; wherein said sensor transducers are optical transducers.

7. A system as in claim 5, wherein said sensor transducers are pressure sensitive transducers.

8. A system as in claim 5, wherein said sensor transducers are light emitting diodes and photo detectors.

9. A system as in claim 1, which system includes a data storage means for storing data corresponding to said previous established standard and a data retrieval means for retrieving said data corresponding to said previously established standard from said storage means.

10. A system for confirming the identity of a person, comprising:

a) a first sensor means, defined by a first substrate and a plurality of sensor elements coupled to said first substrate, for determining a positional orientation between anatomic structures of a hand of a first person, said positional orientation determined during an act by said first person, with said hand of said first person, said hand being in contact with an upper surface of said substrate during performance of said act, said first sensor means for providing a first signal defining said positional orientation between said anatomic structures of said hand during performance of said act,

b) storage means for storing said first signal,

c) a second sensor means, defined by a second substrate and a second plurality of sensor elements coupled to said second substrate for determining a second positional orientation between anatomic structures of a hand of a second person, said second positional orientation determined during an act by said second person corresponding to said act by said first person when said hand of said second person is in contact with a second upper surface of said second substrate, and for providing a second signal defining said second positional orientation between anatomic structures of said hand of said second person;

d) means for retrieving said first signal from said storage means, and

e) means for comparing said first signal with said second signal for confirming that said first person and said second person are the same person.

11. A system as in claim 10, in which said act is writing with a writing instrument on a second substrate supported on said upper surface, and said first sensor means determines said positional orientation between anatomic structures of said hand of said first person when said hand of said first person is holding said writing instrument and said hand is in contact with said upper surface.

12. A system as in claim 10, which system further includes a first means for converting said first signal into a first digital data defining said positional orientation and said storage means includes a memory

means for storing said first digital data and said system also includes a second means for converting said second signal into a second digital data defining said second positional orientation and said comparing means is a digital data comparing means.

13. A system as in claim 11, in which system said second act of writing is on a second substrate supported by said second surface and said second sensor means determines said second positional orientation when said hand of said second person is holding a second writing instrument and said hand of said second person is in contact with said second surface.

14. A method for confirming the identity of a person including the steps of:

a) monitoring, from below a surface, a positional relationship between anatomic structures of a hand of a first person when said hand of said first person is holding a first instrument with said hand, and said hand is in contact with said surface,

b) generating a first data representing said positional relationship between anatomic structures of said hand while said hand is holding said first instrument and said hand is in contact with said surface,

c) storing said first data as a standard for said person;

d) monitoring, from below a second surface, a second positional relationship between anatomic structures of a hand of a second person when said hand of said second person is holding a second instrument with said hand, said second instrument substantially corresponding to said first instrument, and said hand is in contact with said second surface,

e) generating a second data representing said second positional relationship between anatomic structures of said hand of said second person, while said hand is holding said second instrument and said hand is in contact with said second surface,

f) retrieving said first data from storage, and

g) comparing said first data with said second data for confirming that said second person is said first person.

15. A method for confirming the identity of a person including the steps of:

a) monitoring a positional relationship between anatomic structures of a hand of a first person when said first person is holding a first writing instrument with said hand and performing an

act with said writing instrument and said hand makes contact with a first surface,

b) generating a first data defining said positional relationship,

c) storing said first data,

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d) monitoring a second positional relationship between anatomic structures of a hand of a second person when said second person is holding a second writing instrument with said hand, and performing a second act with said second writing instrument, and said hand makes contact with a second surface, wherein said act and said second act are substantially corresponding,

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e) generating a second data defining said second positional relationship,

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f) retrieving said first data, and

g) comparing said second data and said first data for confirming that said second person is said first person.

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16. A system as in claim 1, in which said act performed by said hand of said person is writing with a writing instrument held in said hand.

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17. A system as in claim 1, in which said act performed by said hand of said person is operating a computer mouse when said computer mouse is held in said hand.

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18. A system as in claim 16, in which said act of writing with said writing instrument is performed on a substrate supported on said support surface.

19. A system as in claim 1 wherein said sensor means includes a substrate with an upper surface and a lower surface said substrate for supporting a computer mouse on said upper surface, and a plurality of sensor transducers mounted below said upper surface for detecting contact by said computer mouse and contact by said hand with said upper surface.

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20. A system as in claim 10, in which said act is operating a computer mouse supported on said upper surface and said first sensor means determines said positional orientation between anatomic structures of said hand of said first person when said hand of said first person is holding said computer mouse and said hand is in contact with said upper surface.

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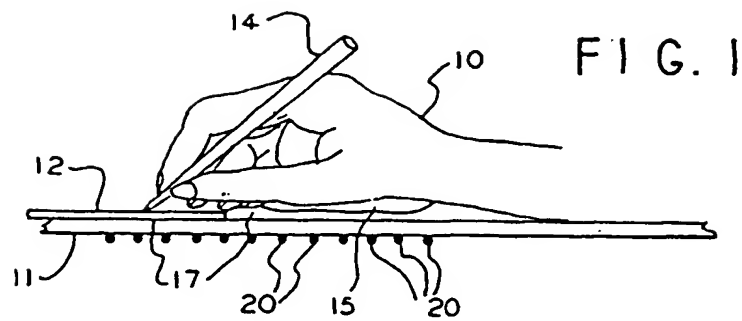


FIG. 1

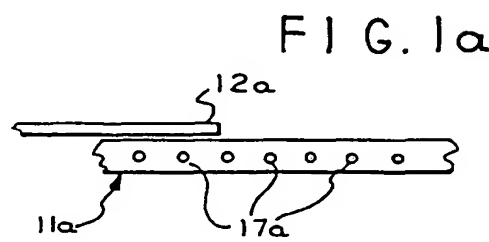


FIG. 1a

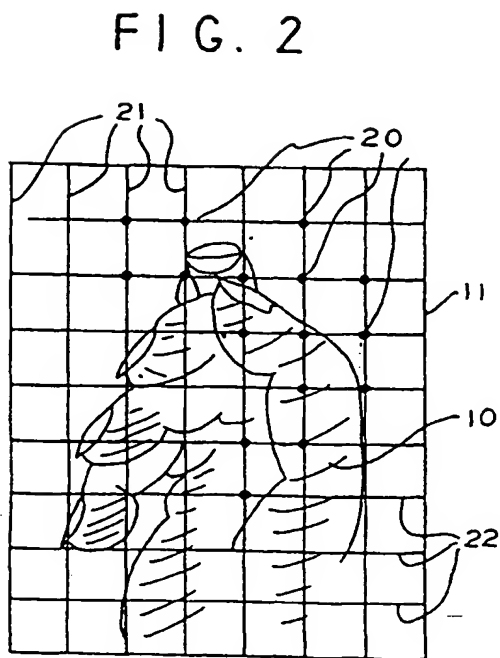


FIG. 2

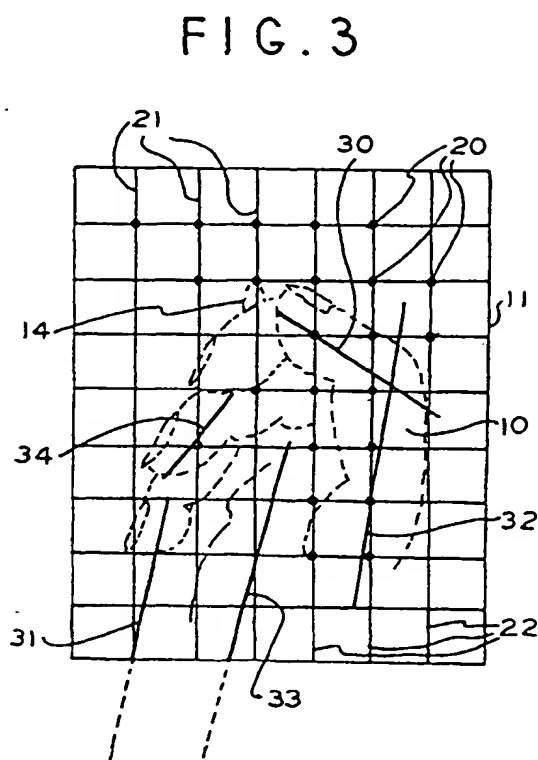


FIG. 3

FIG. 4

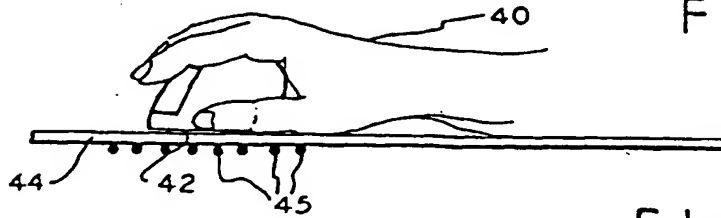


FIG. 5

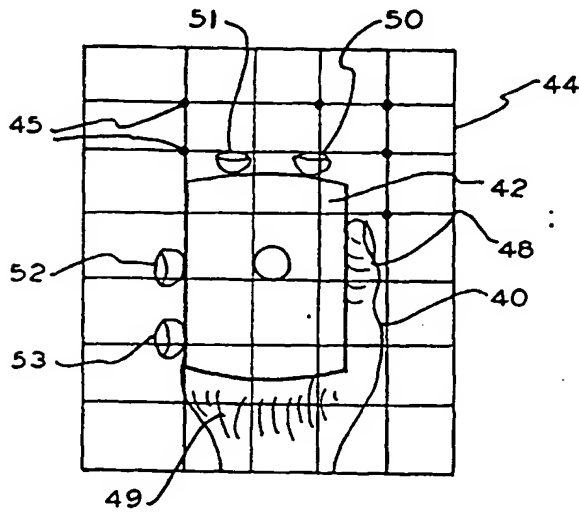


FIG. 6

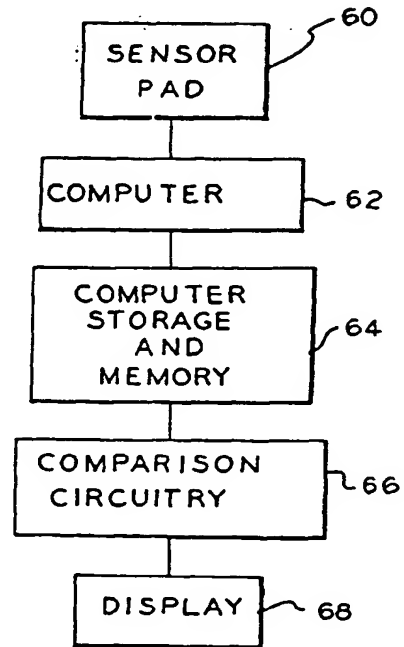
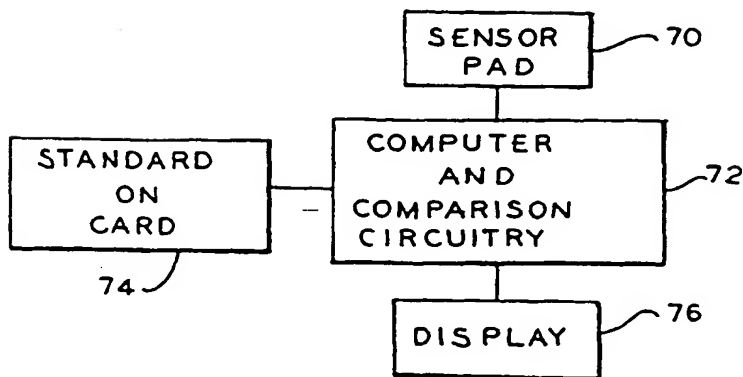


FIG. 7





European Patent
Office

EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 97 11 8018

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.6)
Y	EP 0 546 704 A (AMERICAN TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH COMPANY) 16 June 1993	1-3,5,7,9,10,12,15-20	G07C9/00 G06K9/22
A	* column 2, line 30 - line 41 * * column 3, line 25 - column 11, line 15 * * column 12, line 8 - column 14, line 44; figures 1-10,12 *	4,6,8,11,13,14	
Y	US 4 526 043 A (BOIE ET AL.) 2 July 1985	1-3,5,7,9,10,12,15-20	
	* column 2, line 45 - column 62 * * column 3, line 13 - column 9, line 17; figures 1-6 *		
A	US 4 857 916 A (BELLIN) 15 August 1989	1,10,14,15	
	* column 1, line 58 - column 3, line 36 * * column 4, line 11 - column 11, line 68; figures 1-4 *		
A	EP 0 696 019 A (MARSHALL) 7 February 1996	1,10,14,15	G07C G06K
	* column 1, line 58 - column 7, line 29 *		
A	WO 95 33242 A (EVANS) 7 December 1995	1,10,14,15	
	* page 4, line 4 - page 7, line 19; figures 1-5 *		
A	WO 96 25878 A (CSIR (DEPARTMENT OF MICROELECTRONICS & COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY)) 29 August 1996	1,10,14,15	
	* page 9, line 7 - page 18, line 14; figures 1-5 *		
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 23 June 1998	Examiner Rivero, C
<p>CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS</p> <p>X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document</p> <p>T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons A : member of the same patent family, corresponding document</p>			

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